

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 26, 2010

Ms. Nancy Sutley  
Chair  
Council of Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington DC, 20503

Dear Ms. Chairwoman:

We would like to express our support for the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force's Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and to respectfully urge you to work with all relevant Federal agencies to adopt and implement the recommendations included in the report. We also believe that an Executive Order from the President that formally establishes a national ocean policy, a means for coordinated implementation of that policy, and an effective framework for coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) would help ensure that our oceans are better managed to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Human uses of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes—including fishing, offshore energy development, transportation, recreation, aquaculture, and national security—are expanding at a rate that challenges our ability to manage our ocean and coastal resources in a manner that is sustainable for the economy and the environment. We agree with the Task Force that a new era of integrated, science-based management is needed to ensure that we protect, maintain, and restore the health, resilience, and productivity of our critically important marine resources.

Currently, more than 140 laws and 20 different agencies govern our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. This piecemeal approach does not efficiently address competing uses of the marine environment. CMSP will improve management of the marine environment by implementing an integrated, ecosystem-based, and transparent planning process.

We have already seen several examples of the benefits CMSP implementation can provide in U.S. waters. Recently, in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States Coast Guard, and several other government agencies and stakeholders reconfigured a shipping lane within the sanctuary reducing the risk of vessel collision with endangered North Atlantic right whales. In addition, the new shipping route decreased competing vessel traffic and increased maritime safety. This is just one example of the merits that an integrated, multi-sector approach to marine resource management can offer.

Several states, including California, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, have completed or made considerable progress on ocean planning in their respective state waters. In order to achieve similar successes at the national level, we need a national ocean policy, a coordinated approach

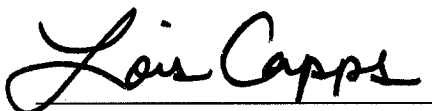
to implementation, and a federal framework for CMSP that is adaptive to new and evolving public needs and uses. As your agency and the other Federal agencies involved in the Task Force move forward to effectively implement CMSP, we must ensure that it:

- is regional in scope;
- protects and maintains identified natural, cultural, and heritage sites and resources;
- is developed cooperatively among Federal, State, territorial, tribal, local authorities and regional governance structures; and
- involves a substantial, transparent, and open stakeholder process.

The goal of the Interim Framework—to develop a comprehensive, integrated approach to planning and managing activities within our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes—complements the earlier set of recommendations submitted by the Task Force to the President on September 10, 2009 and is needed to maintain and restore the health of our valuable marine ecosystems.

We are available for further comment and look forward to working with the Administration as the process moves forward.

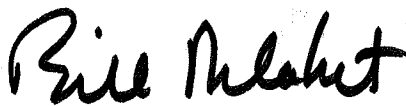
Sincerely,



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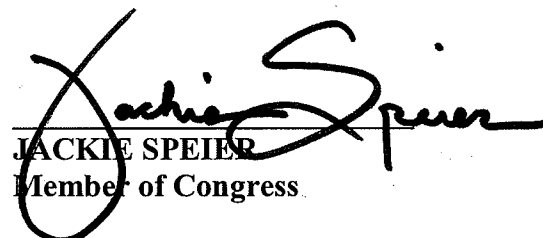
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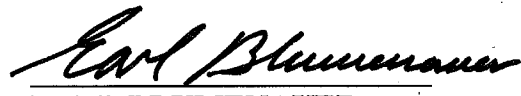


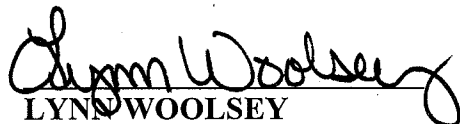
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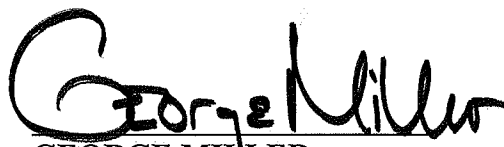
  
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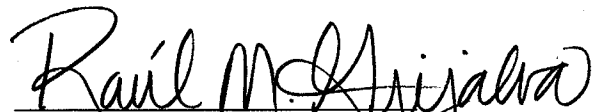
  
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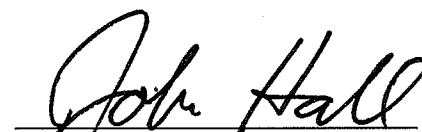
  
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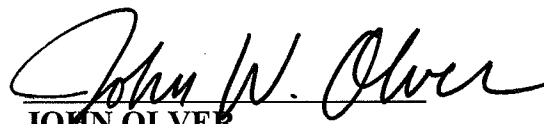
  
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